1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedde AXS

M2
291
342
516

Plate II

Danaigaln Vedden on knob-out rock

[facing p.16a]

142
291
302
411

Plate III

Group of Vedda of Hambantota and Bintenne

[facing p.16 b].

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

614 554 Uru warige should carry game and honey for the men of Morane and Unapana.

291 184 Some of the village Veddas of those days had cloth, and when dancing to the *yaku* they wore the long cloth garment called *kangalla*; the wilder Veddas had no cloth and wore leaves, but it was not clear whether they had not also a certain amount of bark cloth which was their ordinary covering, and leaves may have been worn in addition when they invoked the *yaku*[1].

685 609 778 826 The old man knew of the custom of a man keeping a piece of human liver in his betel pouch; it was universal and in his young days every Vedda desired to have a piece. Strangers, even Veddas, who intruded on the hunting grounds would be killed and their liver taken, no other part of the dead man being used, and the custom gave rise neither to warfare nor to vendettas[2].

764 768 Caves in which a death occurred were deserted, the corpse being covered with leaves; perhaps men very near dissolution were left before death had actually occurred, but this did not seem certain. Bones found in the cave when the group returned to it after an interval of some ten or twelve years were thrown away quite carelessly. The spirits of the dead became the Nae Yaku who, with Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka, gave game and prosperity. The *kirikoraha* ceremony was performed for the Nae Yaku, and *adukku* (cooked food), which even in the old days consisted of coconut and rice, was offered to them. The wilder Veddas gave nothing to the Buddhist priests and made no offerings at shrines, nor did they know the Kataragam God, Kanda Swami, though the village Veddas worshipped him and knew that Walliame had been taken to wife by him, and honey was presented to the goddess at certain shrines, especially one at Kokote Sila, frequented by the village Veddas.

775 769 771 184

535 751 A few of the village Veddas would dance for the Sinhalese in order to protect their cattle, bring prosperity to their villages, and secure them from epidemics; they would dance *kolamaduwa* which the old man pointed out was derived from a

[1] Cf. p. 213.
[2] For details of this custom see Chapter VIII.

Plate X

342
361

Fig. 1. A chena settlement of the Hanebedda Veddas

516
302
291

Fig. 2. Hanebedda Veddas of the Namadewa clan inhabiting the chena settlement

[facing p. 36]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AES Veddas AES

would show him his charm but that he did not wish the white people to know anything about it. Further talk with these people showed that it was impossible to obtain reliable information from them, they had been utterly spoilt as the result of being frequently interviewed by travellers. 609 123

The Veddas have long been regarded as a curiosity in Ceylon and excite almost as much interest as the ruined cities, hence Europeans go to the nearest Rest House on the main road and have the Danigala Veddas brought to them. Naturally the Veddas felt uncomfortable and shy at first, but when they found that they had only to look gruff and grunt replies in order to receive presents they were quite clever enough to keep up the pose. In this they were aided by the always agreeable villagers ever ready to give the white man exactly what he wanted. The white man appeared to be immensely anxious to see a true Vedda, a wild man of the woods, clad only in a scanty loin cloth, carrying his bow and arrows on which he depended for his subsistence, simple and untrained, indeed, little removed from the very animals he hunted. What more easy than to produce him? The Nilgala headman sends word when strangers are expected, then the Veddas repair to their very striking hut on the rock dome and often post a look-out on a big rock about half way up, for on our second visit the leading man of our party who was carrying the camera stated that he saw a Vedda bolting from this rock as we came up. These folk, who when we saw them were their Vedda loin cloths and were smeared with ashes, are reputed to wear ordinary Sinhalese clothes when not in their professional pose, and Mr Bibile, who has himself seen one or more of them in sarongs, points out that the imposture is kept up for two main reasons; firstly, they fear that their exhibition might be stopped (evidently an echo of the chena difficulty of the Eastern Province), or that they might be taxed if they did not appear to be poor fellows living on hardly won jungle produce; secondly, their pose of poverty interests strangers and procures them visitors, whose generosity is the greater the more primitive their mode of life appears to be. [291]

As a matter of fact the Danigala Veddas like those of Henebedda (with whom we became really friendly) keep cattle 231

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS

for the Sinhalese of Potuliyadde, receiving every fifth calf that is born. The community has, or recently had, ten or more head of cattle of their own and have sold bulls to the brother-in-law of our *tavalam*[1] leader for as much as 30 Rs., indeed, our *tavalam* leader stated that he had himself visited the Danigala chena and had also seen the cattle. On this occasion Kaira and his sons wore a coloured cloth as the Sinhalese do and their women wore a *kambaya* and coloured breast handkerchief. Mr Bibile was able to confirm some of these statements from his own knowledge and on making investigations among the local villagers discovered that there was a whole community living on the chena settlement, some of whom had married Sinhalese. Indeed it appeared that not only have members of this community learnt to play the part of professional primitive man, but there has even been specialisation, for as far as we could learn, the men we met at the look-out hut are those who always receive visitors or come to Bibile when sent for, while the others whom we did not see do not pose as wild Veddas. Probably the part they now play had only recently crystallised into a professional rôle, but it must be remembered that so long ago as 1863 Bailey discussing these Veddas, or their fathers, says "they were brought in from the forests to be 'looked at'" and he adds, "I never saw that contempt for money which Tennant supposes is still existing'."[2]

Kovil Vanamai. In the Eastern Province in the neighbourhood of Devulani tank the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are found, this term being applied to a number of groups of Veddas living in this neighbourhood. The name Kovil Vanamai means temple precincts and seems to have arisen from there being one or more temples in this part of the country, while some of these shrines are traditionally associated with Veddas, apparently with old settled coast and village Veddas, for we have no reason to think that the ancestors of the folk we saw at Bandaraduwa, or the other wilder Veddas of fifty years ago, were in any way guardians of the temples or dependent on their bounty. Although at the present day the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are represented by scattered groups, for the most part

[1] A *tavalam* is a train of pack bulls.

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 285.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Plate XIII

142
291
854

Women and girls of Sitala Wanniya

[facing p. 44]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

142
144
141
291

Fig. 1. Men of mixed Sinhalese and Vedda blood from the neighbourhood of Maha Oya.

142
291
854

Fig 2. Women of Ommi

[facing p.46]

Plate XVI

142
291
[854]

Fig. 1. Men of Yakuve

Fig. 2. Veddas of Ulpota

[Facing p. 56]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

"It is probable good-looking women have often been kept back by others who had not equal confidence in me[1]."

Veddas are affectionate and indulgent parents, never refusing a small child anything it wants and giving it always of the best. We have frequently seen men save for their children food which had been given to them and which they considered specially good, such as bananas or coconuts. The babies are generally happy, but should they cry their wishes are immediately gratified by either parent. We saw a naked boy of about two and a half years strut proudly up and down outside Pihilegodagalge with his father's axe hung on his shoulder, he was extremely happy and all went well until he threatened one of the dogs with the axe, then his mother was obliged to interfere and the child tried to hit her with it; the father seeing this got up and tried to coax the child into giving up the axe, but the boy was now excited and would not give it up, at last he flung it at his father and hit his leg. The man was obviously annoyed and threw the axe from him into the jungle, but he did not attempt to scold or punish the child who was now howling with rage, indeed, after a little while some food was given him to pacify him.

Another time a woman who had been cutting yams with a knife put this down, when her baby snatched it up, and although she was obliged to watch lest he hurt himself, she allowed him to play with the knife. Yet when a child is old enough to wear a little rag in the way of clothing, possibly from six to eight years old, he is expected to behave himself properly and strange to say he does so. One day it was raining heavily, and we were all sitting in the rock shelter at Pihilegodagalge; at the further end of the cave we noticed a lad of seven or nine years old having a heated argument with his mother, suddenly he turned round and went out into the rain, when he returned he had controlled his temper; later we remarked on this and were told that the lad was considered old enough to behave as a man; a boy of this age would not hit his mother as a little child might do and yet be excused. It may here be mentioned that children of both sexes go naked until about six or seven years old, though perhaps the general age for the assumption of

[1] *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, 1886, p. 190.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

clothing is younger in the case of girls than boys. The boy assumes a piece of rag attached to a string in the same manner as men, while girls wear a piece of stuff fastened round their hips like a sarong. A child's first cloth is put on by its mother without any ceremony. The only toys seen were bows and arrows, and these are possessed by every male child. We never saw a little girl play with a bow and arrow, but mothers make them for the baby boys while these are still crawling about. Such toys of course are small and roughly made, but bigger boys of five years old and upwards make quite neat little bows, and shoot with them tolerably well; they do not feather their arrows. Other children were seen playing with clay and sticks; and girls frequently play with broken pots with which they pretend to cook.

As women take the children with them when they go out to dig for yams, little girls soon learn to do this, and boys would begin to be taken out hunting when about ten years old. It was difficult to find out whether the fathers' or mothers' brothers took the greater part in training the boys and it seemed that a lad eager to go out hunting would be taken by any grown man, who in the very small community is usually a relative. Lads would be encouraged by their elders to shoot at a mark with their bows and arrows, and later they would stalk small birds and shoot fish[1].

When a child tells a lie he may be told "Go away, I do not believe what you say," but it appeared that even young children were usually truthful. One thing is taught the lads systematically, that is the method of collecting honey from the combs of the rock bee. Whenever the caves are conveniently situated a ladder of creepers is suspended from a tree in the jungle above and hangs over the end of the face of rock which forms the cave. On this the youths play at "honey getting." At Pihilegodagalge the lads were quite willing to demonstrate to us how it was done, and the elder men showed clearly that this

[1] Nevill, in the *Taprobanian* (Vol. I, 1886, p. 189), says "……a pellet bow is used occasionally by small boys, and birds are often shot with it, though the aim seems very uncertain." Pellet bows were seen at Henebedda, they are used regularly by the Sinhalese in the neighbourhood, and we do not doubt that the practice was introduced by them.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

524 857 868 was a game which they encouraged. A lad of about thirteen collected some green leaves and tied them together with creeper, then taking an arrow, a toy *masliya*, and a broken gourd tied with creeper, which hung over his arm, for a *maludewa*, he set fire to the leaves and climbed the ladder[1]. While lowering the smoker and letting the smoke blow into the crevice in the rock where the comb was supposed to be, he pretended to cut round its sides with an arrow and thrust at it with his *masliya* (figure 3), from which he transferred the honey into the gourd. As he descended from the ladder he beat his chest and sides as though driving off the bees, and directly he reached the ground rushed into the jungle to escape from them, all the smaller children imitating him with great glee. Obviously this was a well-known and favourite game, for even the elders took part in it, throwing their cloths over their heads and running into the jungle.

524 857 At Henebedda (which we visited before Pihilegodagalge) there were no children present when we spoke about honey getting, but four young men were eager to show us how it was done and acted the scene with great spirit. They took from our camp a piece of white and a piece of brown paper, and fastened them with some wax to the roof of their cave, then as there was no tree above the cave around which to fasten a creeper, one man crouched on the top of the rock and held the ends of the ladder in his hands, another stood above and lowered a smoker of green leaves while a third climbed the ladder and collected the honey from the white paper and the grubs from the brown. Afterwards the collector divided the spoil equally and amid much laughter they all sat down and pretended to eat, one actually going through the pantomime of washing his hands after the meal. They eat the grubs as well as the honey.

[439] 241 As regards clothing, pedlars have brought them cloth for so long that no Vedda living knows what was done when they could not buy it, but it is generally stated that they made bark

[1] The *maludewa* is the vessel made of deerskin in which honey should be collected and the *masliya* the wooden four-pronged implement with which the comb is broken up and transferred to the *maludewa*. For figures of *maludewa* and *masliya*, see Plate LXV and figure 3 (p. 93) respectively.

412 415

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

cloth of the *riti* (*Antiaris innoxia*) of which material the Sinhalese still make rice bags. Men wear a rag of "white" cotton about 9 inches wide passed between their legs, and held in place by each end being passed over a waist string. This cotton material they prefer to anything else for two reasons, firstly, it very soon becomes a dull brown, and hence is less obvious when hunting than a coloured cloth would be, secondly, it is thin machine-made material from which they can easily tear narrow strips for tinder, when they make fire. The women wear coloured cotton cloth of the kind that is woven at Batticaloa, it is a strong material and is not easily torn. A single width forms the length of their skirt from waist to knee and is fastened round their waists like a sarong. Thus, the men's preference for "white" and the women's for coloured cloth is purely economical, depending on the kind of material it has been the pedlar's habit to bring. These pedlars visit the wilder Veddas once a year after the honey collecting season; they never approach the caves, but when within about a quarter of a mile of them they shout till a Vedda comes to them, then they expose their wares and the Vedda returns to the cave to fetch as many pots and gourds of honey and as much dried flesh as he is willing to exchange. The "silent trade," mentioned by Knox[1], is now a legend among the Sinhalese of which no tradition lingers among the Veddas. We have Bailey's evidence that it had ceased before 1863, and the old Kandyan we met (see p. 31) remembered it only as a tradition in the days of the rebellion in 1818. "They are not new, nor have they been for very long, so shy as to be prevented from bartering freely enough

Fig. 5. Toy *mallya* × $\frac{1}{10}$ (about).

[1] Cf. p. 2.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

boar wounded by the companions of Bandura, as is related in the Bambura Yaka dance.

The Henebedda Veddas washed before performing or assisting at the *kirikoraha* seen by us, and every Vedda who invoked the *yaku*, either let down his hair before beginning to dance or while dancing, in the latter instance presumably as he felt "possession" coming upon him. Many Veddas put on the *kangala* before dancing, this being a length of white cloth worn round the waist as is shown in many of the photographs reproduced in this chapter. Presumably this was not worn for the arrow dance, which is especially performed by unsuccessful hunters without any special preparation. We do not think that a leaf girdle was ever worn as a ceremonial garment when dancing. Handuna of Sitala Wanniya said that at some time, which he put more than three generations ago, there were Veddas, whom he called *Attukola Veddo*, who lived so remote from the Sinhalese that they had no cloth and so always wore leaf girdles, but he was quite confident that no Veddas who had cloth ever wore such girdles especially to invoke the *yaku*. This agrees with Nevill's conclusions[1] and does not conflict with the experience of the Sarasins.[2]

The Roman numbers in parentheses after references to invocations in the accounts of the ceremonies described in this chapter refer to the invocations given in Chapter X.

The Arrow Dance.

This, the simplest of the Vedda dances, has been described at length by the Drs Sarasin who saw it danced by "Veddas of the Nilgala district[3]." We have already quoted Bailey's account of the arrow dance as he found it danced by the ancestors of these Veddas two generations ago, and Monsieur Emile

[1] "I have especially questioned the best informed Vaeddas whether leaves were worn, either at ceremonies or otherwise. They all say yes, they were worn once, when cotton cloth was hard and dear to get, by those who lived where there were no Rài trees. They were only worn by the poorest, and from necessity, not choice. The leaves chosen were those of shrubs, the branches of which ended in rather pendulous sprays of foliage, and these were tucked under the waist string as a sort of apron." (*Op. cit.* p. 188.)

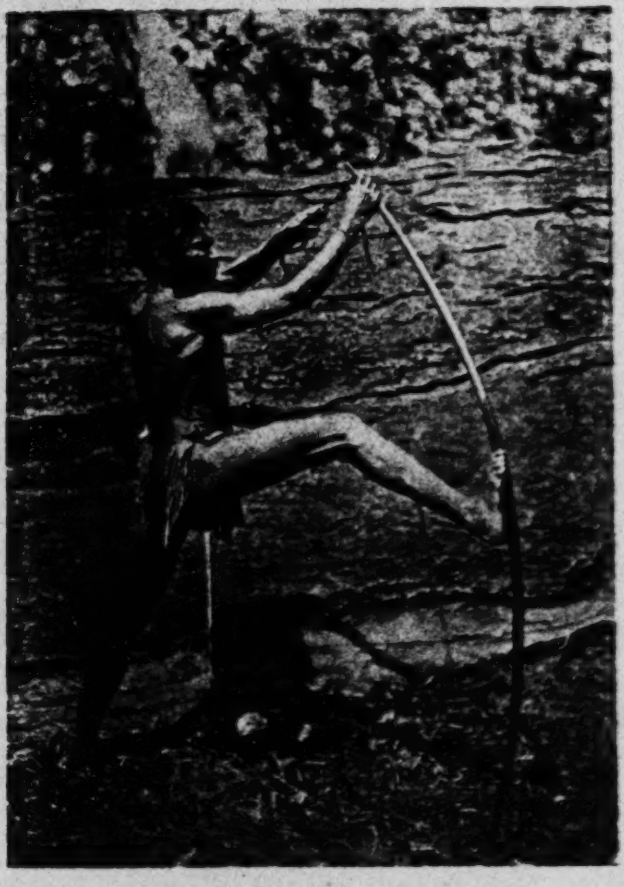
[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 387—389.

[3] *Op. cit.* pp. 512—514.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Plate LXIII

411
142
291
516



Handuma of Henebedda stringing his bow

[facing p. 326a]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

101 We found that the Coast Veddas spoke of themselves as
113 Verdas and said that long ago their fathers came from inland.
191 They all speak Tamil, but some assert that they still know, and at times use among themselves, their old Vedda language, but when we asked the men who made this statement to speak in their ancestral dialect they spoke Sinhalese[1]. Besides this a few of the older men know the names of some of the Vedda *marugé*, while others are able to trace their descent to them.

142 The Coast Vedda is darker, taller and more stoutly built than the true Veddas. In fact they generally resemble low caste Tamils, yet in almost every settlement there are one or two men shorter than their comrades and presenting an almost typical Vedda caste of countenance. The women are all much
[291] bigger than true Vedda women and would pass for Tamils, after whose fashion they dress.

Plate LXVIII, figs. 1 and 2, represent Verdas from settlements to the north of Kalkudah.

241 The Verdas build comfortable huts in small clearings, usually
342 within a mile of the sea; they cultivate maize and pumpkins and other easily grown crops round their houses and in patches of clearing in the surrounding jungle.

415 They have plenty of pots and baskets and also possess drums
534 and fishing gear, so that their mode of life differs but little from
621 that of the poor and low caste Tamils who are their neighbours. One, two, or more rarely, three houses stand in each clearing, and it seems that the people living in each clearing are closely related by blood or connected by marriage.

361 The chief Verda settlements north of Batticaloa are Pellan-
505 chenai near Kalkudah 20 miles from Batticaloa and at Varkanari some 10 miles north of Kalkudah on the far side of the river which is crossed by a ferry at Valarchchenai. At Panichchenkeni some 14 miles further north is another ferry, where the local Verdas act as ferrymen, while there are two other Verda settlements some three miles beyond the ferry at sites called Vellaiade and Kandaladi respectively.

[1] Nevill (loc. cit.) noticed the same state of affairs, he said "Only the old men speak what they call Vaedda, which is pure but quaint Sinhalese with a Vaedda accent, as a rule, though mixed with some words characteristic of true Vaedda."

Plate LXVIII

142
•291

Fig. 1. Coast Veddas.

[534
482
516]

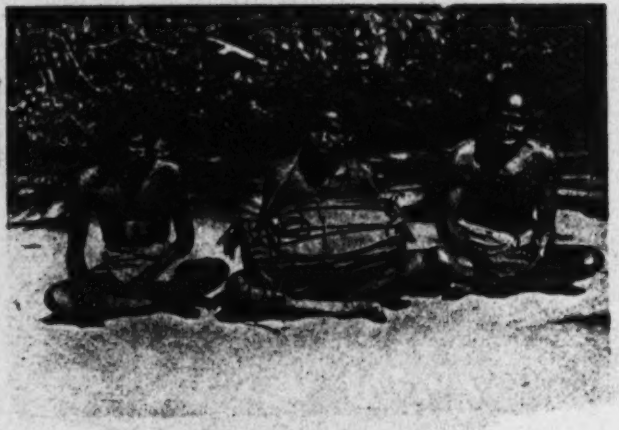


Fig. 2. Coast Veddas of Vakarai

[facing p. 332a]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

535
796
291

Fig. 1. Site of dance at Vakarai, showing *hudarum* and pole

Fig. 2. Dancing round the *hudarum*

[facing p. 338a]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

535
796
291

The end of the dance at Vakarai

[facing p. 338b]

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

ness; in others, that perplexed manner common in people of weak intellect. The women appear sharper and quicker than the men, unless it be that they have less *mauvais honte*, and acquit themselves better before company, but they are the most ordinary specimens of the sex I ever saw.*

The Veddahs bear a very striking resemblance to each other—both in feature and expression. And this is especially remarkable among those of Nilgala, who have preserved their ancient customs more completely than their brethren of Bintenne, who live in a less secluded country, have been able to do.

Their clothing—so to speak—is the most scanty conceivable. A scrap of dirty cloth, scarcely larger than the paper on which I write, supported in front by a string round the waist, being a complete Veddah suit for male or female; for the rag that does duty for crinoline, is scarcely less diminutive than that which represents the male garmenta† . Indeed, almost the only difference in the costume of the men and women is, that the latter have their ears pierced, and wear in the lobes round studs of ivory.

Neither sex is remarkable for personal cleanliness, and with their rugged unkempt locks half obscuring their features, the Veddahs certainly realize all one's preconceived notions of the most barbarous savages.

Knox's picture of "a Vadda, or Wild Man" is a fancy portrait, and decidedly flattering. They do not "tye their hair on their crowns in a bunch", nor do they indulge in nearly so much drapery or beard as is worn by that stout well-to-do-looking gentleman, who is placidly smoking an imaginary pipe, for smoking is a luxury at which the Veddahs have not yet arrived. The contrast between Knox's idea of the wild men, and their actual appearance, is amusing.

When brought in from their forests to be "looked at," they huddle themselves together like a herd of wild and timid animals driven into a corner from which there is no escape. Attract their attention by a present of rice or cloth, and in an instant they become like eager children, scrambling for a new toy,—forget the presence of strangers, and intent only on what is before them, jostle each other, clamouring for a fair division of the spoil, and complaining loudly against those of their companions whom they suspect of having got more than their share of the good things.

But it is not fair to judge of them when so utterly out of their

---

* I saw some of them display the liveliest curiosity at the sight of their "white sisters", two remarkably good specimens of whom found their way to Nilgala in 1857.

† Formerly the matting-like bark of the "Riti tree" (*antiaris innaria*, or *A. saccidora*) supplied the place of cloth; and bags made of this fibrous bark are still used by the Singhalese for carrying rice, etc.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

But the Veddahs have not yet arrived at such a pitch of civilisation. Divorce is unknown among them. They are kind and constant to their wives, and few of their Kandyan neighbours could say as I have heard a Veddah say, "Death alone separates husband and wife." The idea of such constancy was quite too much for one of the bystanders, an intelligent Kandyan chief, on one occasion when I was talking on these subjects to some Veddahs. "Oh, sir," he exclaimed, apologetically, "they are just like Wanderoos."* He was perfectly scandalized at the utter barbarism of living with only one wife, and never parting till separated by death.†

Tennent says they have no marriage rites; this is true; but I am surprised that no one should have told him of what very nearly approaches a marriage ceremony, and one which is curious in itself, and so far as I know, unlike any custom among other barbarous tribes. The bachelor Veddah, who meditates matrimony, himself selects the lady of his choice, wisely preferring his own judgment to that of others; and providing himself with the greatest "delicacies of the season", for example, a pot of honey and a dried iguano, proceeds to her father's hut and states the object of his visit. There being no objection to the proposed alliance, the father calls his daughter, who comes forth with a thin cord of her own twisting in her hand. She ties this round the bridegroom's waist, and they are man and wife. The man always wears this string. Nothing would induce him to part with it. When it wears out it is the wife's duty to twist a new one and

* The Wanderoo is a large monkey common throughout the island, one of the three species of Presbytes, probably the P. Ursinus.

† I have spoken of polygamy and indiscriminate divorce among the Kandyans in the present tense. I should have used the past, for in 1859 they were abolished by law. It fell to the lot of the late Sir Henry Ward, whose name will be gratefully cherished in Ceylon as long as Ceylon exists, and whose loss is daily becoming more felt and deplored, that this remarkable change in the habits of an Oriental people should have taken place during his rule—a change, originating with the Kandyans themselves, which has given them marriage laws as pure as our own, an extraordinary proof of increasing civilization. In May 1858, a large deputation of influential chiefs waited on Sir Henry Ward, at the Pavilion, in Kandy, to seek the aid of Government to remove what they felt to be a stigma on their race and character, by abolishing polygamy and making the marriage tie a binding obligation. This was followed by a petition, signed by 8,000 chiefs and headmen on behalf of the Kandyan people, repeating their earnest prayer. The result was the enactment of an ordinance "To amend the laws of marriage in the Kandyan country," which will do more to raise the social character of the Kandyans than any other measure can do. They have reason to be proud of having spontaneously wrought this great change, and they fully appreciate Her Majesty's interest in its success, which she graciously desired should be specially made known to them.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

bind it round him. Many a more civilised wife would rejoice if she could forge new fetters for her husband as binding as these. The utility of the string is simply to keep in its place the scanty rag which constitutes the Veddah costume.* Married or single he must wear one; but when he is married he substitutes for his bachelor's string one of the lady's twisting, and besides its use, it is emblematic of the marriage tie; for as he never parts with it, so he clings to his wife through life.†

I have spoken of the monogamy and conjugal fidelity of the Veddahs as favourably contrasting with the opposite practices among the Kandyans. But there was an ancient custom amongst them which has scarcely yet become extinct, a custom most revolting to every civilised mind. It is that which sanctions the marriage of a man with his younger sister. To marry an elder sister or aunt would, in their estimation, be incestuous, a connection in every respect as revolting to them as it would be to us—as much out of the question and inadmissible as the marriage with the younger sister was proper and natural. It was, in fact, the proper marriage, as much so as the marriage between the father's sister's son and the mother's brother's daughter is the most proper that a Kandyan can contract.‡

How far this practice has become obsolete it is hard to say. Amongst the Veddahs of Bintenne it has certainly ceased, and they now regard it with disgust.§ Still it has not very long died out, for many amongst them have seen the children of such marriages, and even cited some by name to me. But I question if it has yet disappeared from amongst the wilder Veddahs of Nilgala. For some time I believed that it was invariably practised there, and

---

* It is, in fact, what the Singhalese call the Diya lanoowa, the "water-string," *i. e.*, the string which supports the rag of cloth which natives wear when bathing, and which is "full dress" among the Veddahs.

† The following anecdote is an apt illustration of the value set by a Kandyan on the marriage tie. One of the civil officers of the fort was travelling through his district, explaining the provisions of the new Kandyan marriage ordinance, when a native said to him—"I don't like that ordinance at all." "Why?" he asked. "Why, you tell us we are not to send away our wives, if we like. Now, suppose I bought a piece of rice land, *and afterwards found my wife did not know how to weed!*"

‡ "Every Bedouin has a right to marry his father's brother's daughter before she is given to a stranger; and hence "cousin" (bint' amm), in polite phrase, signifies "wife." Burton's *El Medina Meyna*, vol. iii. A Kandyan would regard such a marriage incestuous, for such first cousins are considered sisters. The term applied to such a female cousin as is mentioned in the text as the proper bride for a Kandyan is "nenna," which in Veddah dialect is the word for "wife." The corresponding word "noora" is the Veddah term for "husband."

§ Mr. Birch informs me that the Veddahs of the Batticaloa district "indignantly deny marrying their sisters."

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

197 198 recognise a single expression. The following morning I taxed the people with speaking in Vedda language, but they stoutly declared that they could only speak Sinhalese.

In my opinion the majority of the people of the Maha Wellrata are of Vedda origin, but have discarded their [177] primitive customs as they dwindled in numbers, and while 178 other causes, such as marriage with neighbouring people, tended to still further break down the older customs of the isolated clans that made up the Vedda race as a whole, they still clung in secret to the language of their forefathers, as a binding link and a means of private communication.

115 At Salawai, in the Panawa Pattu, I found one family who admitted that their grandfather was a real Vedda, belonging to one of the clans occupying the country on the confines of the Kumbukkan river.

From the oldest member of this family I obtained a mass of information respecting the habits and customs of the Vedda people.

614 According to this individual, who has adopted the Sinhalese [563] name of Dissan Hamy, the Veddas were divided up into a number of waruge or clans, each of which occupied and hunted over a specific area of country, and had no connection with the others who lived as separate communities.

The members of each clan were more or less related, and previous to the disintegration of the Veddas as a race, they could not marry any but members of the same waruge.

[462] They lived by hunting, in which only the males took part. Their habitations were caves, and occasionally leaf shelters, but the latter was uncommon.

562 593 The females were kept in a state of rigid subjection to the males, and could not take part in the chase, ordinary ceremonials, or conversation with any but those who were immediate relations, or the closest relatives of the husband.

562 593 224 If the husband was pleased to *throw* some meat to his wife, as part of his spoil in the chase, that was all the woman was entitled to. She could not claim a share simply because she was the man's wife.

291 824 Under ordinary circumstances, both the males and females were naked, assuming only for special occasions a loin cloth

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the bark of the Ritti (*Antiaris toxicaria*) for males, and a sort of leaf-skirt for the females.

No jewellery was worn by the males or females. Sometimes a necklace made of shells ("Bellan") was worn by the younger females, but such things as rings were unknown to the earlier Veddas.

They had no idea of time beyond the subdivision of the 24 hours into two divisions, viz., that of light and darkness. Other than this there was no computation except a man's knowledge of a certain striking event that happened in his "small time," but how long ago that was could not be stated.

The taking of a woman to wife required mainly the sanction of the girl's father, after which a few exchanges might be made in signification of the consent of parties. After this the man and woman lived together, while before they would not so much as dare speak to one another in public, unless related.

The age of the woman was invariably extremely youthful at the time of her "marriage," and even at the present day, notwithstanding the comparative civilization of the modern Vedda descendants, youthful marriages still prevail.

I found in response to my inquiries in all parts of the Vedda country that I visited, that 12 years was a common age for a girl to be taken to wife at. In one village I was present at an inquiry by a headman into a case where the girl was only 8. In this case the headman expressed the opinion that the marriage was "very bad."

My informant told me that with the Veddas there was no custom for the woman, when about to give birth to a child, to go to a separate house or hut for the purpose, but that this custom had only come in later.

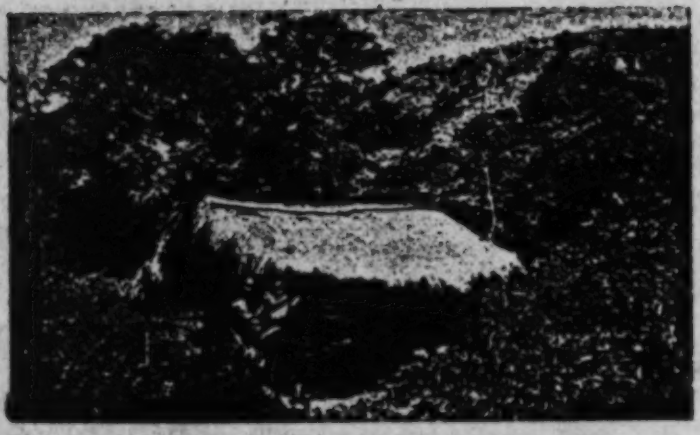
Among the Veddas there was no such thing as prostitution, nor could I learn that there was polyandry.

The bearing age of women would be at about 14, that of puberty being a year earlier.

Women would have children up to about 28, and as might be expected from the condition of youthful cohabitation for one or two years prior to puberty, the proportion of males and females in a family would be pretty nearly equal. On

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

137
342



Poromola's lonely home

291
411

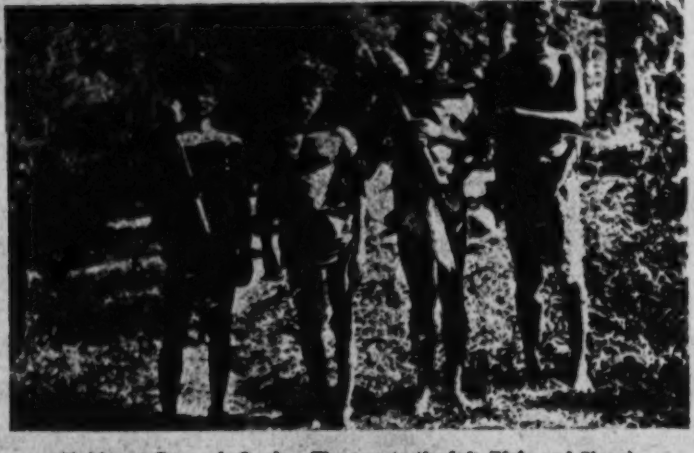
Vedda bowmen of Dambana

[facing p. vi]

137
342

A Vedda home of the Ulpotta. (Page 8)

142
291
412



Veddas or Gunner's Quoin. The two to the left (Vela and Sinna) are the most typical. (Page 8)

[facing p. 8]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

291
301
415
516

"Their homes, the shelter of the trees." (Page 9)

142
291
622

Naida and his family. (Page 9)

[facing p. 9]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
411
271
[412
482]
622]

The last of the Hanneheddi Veddas—Pandola and Handuna (Page 16)

Handuna strings his bow (Page 16)

[FACING p. 16]

142
291
482
854

Handuna's household. (Page 18)

142
291
224
411
482

Hennebedde Veddas (Page 16)

The iguana hunter. (Page 17)

[FACING P. 17]

S: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291
482
854

"Sedato, wistful children." (Page 36)

[facing p. 36]

142
●291
301

Kandian of Dambana [illegible 37]

[facing p. 37]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291
301

A Vedda girl of Dolagalwella (Page 35)

312

Yakkure tank (Page 39)

[Facing p. 38]

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

133

Destota falls. (Page 30)

291
412
415

Sinna, a Vedda of Gunner's Quoin. (Page 42)

[facing p. 39]

5: Spitzel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

291 When Kauwa was young his people wore threshed *riti** bark suspended
287 from the waist by a *riti* strip. A Vedda belle would sometimes trick
824 herself out in such adornments as a *riti* collar sewn at the back with
nuga† fibre, anklets of red ixora blooms, lotus petals in ear lobes and as
301 garlands round neck and loins, and circlets of strung wild jasmine round the hair knot. Difficult, though it be, to reconcile this picture with the wretched specimens one meets to-day, it must be admitted that Kauwa had no imagination to run loose. An old song tells of Vedda maidens whose heads were adorned with peacock plumes.

344 Vedda man and wife usually walk the forest together, and accouche-
ments often occur away from home and female assistance; the man then
84 does duty for midwife by placing the woman with her back to a rock
260 and two stones to her feet. For nine days after child-birth he feeds her only on *gonala* yams and the flesh of monitors.

*Antiaris toxicaria.
† *Ficus altissima*

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

291
342

"Kauwa's hut was a thing to behold." (Page 55)

[Facing p. 58]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

411

Kaurala and his wife. (Page 55)

291
516
854

A Galmede home. (Page 60)

[FACING p. 59]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

CHAPTER VI

VEDDAS OF BINGODA

I. BINGODA HOMES

Innumerable years had flown,
Since first the chisel in her hand
Necessity, the sculptor, took,
And in her spacious meaning planned
These forms, and that eternal look.

L. Binyon

197 [101] Concede me three points and I shall attempt to show that there exist in Ceylon to-day Veddas worthy of the name. Language, apparel and weapons are the concessions I ask.

Let us begin by confessing, that the Veddas we shall tell of have no pure language of their own, but merely a patois, in which Sinhalese words predominate and Vedda words are few; their clothing is not the traditional leaf or threshed *riti* bark, but fragments of foul rag affording, if anything, less cover; the weapons they favour are guns (of a type almost as dangerous to user as to quarry) and not bows and arrows which they employ only in sore necessity.

291 411

Vital issues, you will say, which should deprive this people of their name. But language, dress and arms may change without materially altering, for a time at least, ancient customs and primeval instincts.

The word Vedda originally meant hunter; and a people supreme in jungle-craft, always capable of gleaning from the unfriendly forests a sufficiency for their needs and utterly incompetent to husband even the primitive agriculture of the *chena*, has surely a claim to the name.

101

224 [411] [427] It must not be supposed that every Vedda possesses a gun; far from it; occasionally there may be a single weapon to a whole clan. The usual thing is for the Sinhalese or Moors to lend their guns to these superb trackers, who never waste a shot and seldom return without their quarry, a large share of which goes by agreement to the owner of the gun.

114 Of my first accidental meeting with these Veddas amid the hills of Galmede, I have already told. Barely four months had elapsed before I found myself renewing their acquaintance; this time with set purpose.

Arriving at the forest village of Mullegama, sacred to Buddhists, and abounding in lime groves and Moors, I was fortunate enough to run up against my friend Kaurala of Kottelinde, who, so difficult of acquisition before, now became our willing guide.

131 Bingoda, the home of our Veddas, is some three miles from Mullegama, and lies on the Dhungolla Oya, a tributary of the Magalavatan Aar which connects Bingoda with Galmede ten miles away—all in the circuit of

5: Spittel D-8 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291

Sadhu Sunda, Ceylon and their Sanskrit [Page 64]

[facing p. 64]

2A1
30(
[58]
516

[facing p.65]

A: Spittel D-S (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vo.4a AX5

516
291

Little Hawkman. (Page 65)

[Facing p. 66]

5; Spinel D-5 (ca. 1930) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

582 The correct Vedda marriage is that between the children of a brother
835 and sister. A marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters is regarded as incest. And here their standard is higher than ours.

587 Marriage for the Vedda is a very simple affair. Suthubanda, for instance, espoused a widow in his household. When she was freed by the death of her husband, it was right that he should take her, and he made no demur, though she was old and ugly and he young and robust.
583 Kaurala went to the younger of his two wives with a length of cloth, a bead necklace, a bangle and two hair pins, and brought her away. Gama, whose wife was an orphan of Henebedde, did much the same. But
911 the rule is that a man should cast in his lot with his wife's people. Then, the morning after marriage the pair go into the jungle and bring home, it may be a *henava* comb, a monitor lizard, or some yams, and thus the common life begins.

585 The waist-string plays as important a part in Vedda matrimony as
● 291 does the ring in ours. When a woman has tied round the waist of a man a string of her own twisting, he becomes her husband. This string, some
[283 six encircling loops, lasting practically a life-time, is made of *niyanda*
824 (bow-string hemp), the long bayonet-shaped leaf of which is shredded to fibre by being drawn repeatedly between the palm of the hand and a bare branch.

586 Divorce is as informal as marriage; the woman being merely returned to her parents or requested to go to whomsoever she chooses. But the Vedda is not, as a rule, unreasonably capricious in the exercise of his power; he has too great a sense of responsibility and of fair-play towards
762 the mother of his children and partner in his toil. A lad I knew blew out his chest with a gun, from remorse at having taken to himself two sisters who continually quarrelled with each other over his affections.

593 A Vedda will not hesitate to chastise his spouse when necessary; but that, after all, is only a mark of affection! We saw one belabour his wife unmercifully because she would not let him accompany us; she took all the beating she got, but had her own way in the end.

551 These people do not address their women-folk by name. Ask a man to
515 name his children, and he will stutter and stumble at the task. A Vedda hails his wife somewhat as follows: "What are you doing there? Come here and break my head." This apparently suicidal request is only his way of requesting her to perform the delightful uxorial duty of cleansing his hair of vermin.

614 The Veddas of Bingoda claim to be of the Morana *warige*, the best
565 Vedda clan. Those of Danigala, of the Unapane clan, come next. But
515 for the Veddas of Henebedde the Bingoda folk profess disdain, calling them *Uro* (swine) and *Waliyo*, and saying it was their duty in old-time to pour water on the Morana's hands when they had fed. How much water these Moranas themselves use we have yet to learn; for, if the saying be true, that the worse the odour the better the Vedda, then the Veddas of Bingoda are aristocrats. What a thing is human nature after all, when even this wretched little remnant of humanity, without a rag to their bodies claim social precedence over each other?

614 There are nine Vedda clans or *warigas*; and each has its own story:
173 The Morana *warige* was so called by a Sinhalese king who yearned for the *mora* fruit when it was out of season, and had his want proclaimed.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291
482
224

An ape for dinner. (Page 82)

342

Alu-galge, a Vedda cave. (Page 84)

[Facing p. 86]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291
516
854

Veddas of Dambana. (Page 95)

142
291
351

Veddas of Dambana. (Page 95)

[FACING p. 94]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

142
291
411
415
482

The finest Veddas we saw in Bintenne. (Page 95)

[facing p. 95]

18: Kleiweg de Zwaan E-5 (1906-1910) 1925 OB1 Indonesia
Vedda AX5

172
302
516
291
411
137

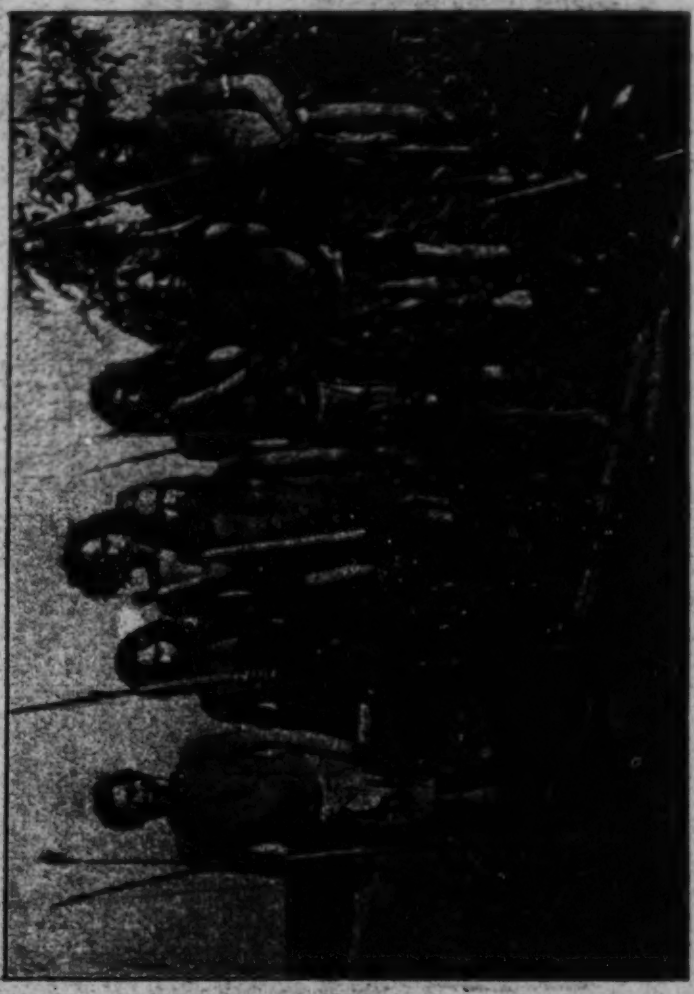


Photo R. Martin.

Fig. 16. Veddas from the Nilgala District (Ceylon)

18: Kleiweg de Zwaan E-5 (1906-1910) 1925 OB1 Indonesia
Vedda AX5

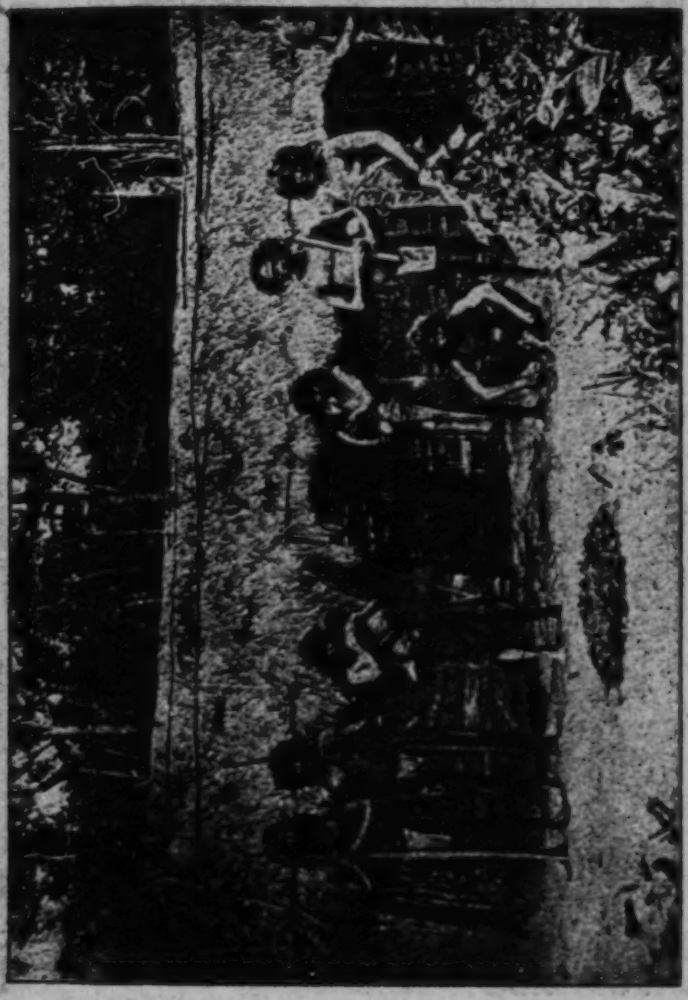


Photo Fr. Sarasin.

342
137
291
516
411
854

Fig. 17. Veddas of the Nilgala Region